

# St Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund

Newsletter

March 2009

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"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need yet does not care for him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." -1 John 3:17-18



Dear Friends,

God calls us to love one another. This is a very personal directive to action, not a vague, humanitarian concern for the anonymous poor. For this reason, we try in these newsletters to present the personal stories of children whose lives are being changed thanks to your support and your prayers. Each child is a unique creation of God, with a personality, strengths, weaknesses, and dreams.

**Do the right thing.** The most affordable form of public transportation in Uganda is the *matatu*, a 14-seat minibus. In addition to a driver, each *matatu* requires a conductor whose job it is to collect the fares and mentally keep track of which passenger owes how much. Nicholas, 17 years old but looking very much like a man, was working as a conductor on his older brother's *matatu* trying to earn enough money to go back to school. He never knew his mother—he was too young when she died. His father, who died recently, was not a factor in his life.

Nicholas had completed Senior 2 in 2007. An excellent student, for two years he had received a personal tuition scholarship from the headmaster. Nicholas worked during school holidays to pay for his uniform and school supplies. When the headmaster left the school, the scholarship evaporated. Nicholas worked full time throughout 2008 and managed to accumulate enough money to pay for one

school term. Then his brother's ancient *matatu* developed serious mechanical problems. Knowing that this vehicle was the lifeline for the family, Nicholas postponed his dream and handed over his entire year's savings for the repairs. It was at this low point that he heard of our program. Nicholas is no longer a full time conductor, but a full time student in Senior 3.



**What can a sister do?** Fatuma made one big mistake in her life. She was 18 when her mother died (her father had died five years earlier), and Fatuma became pregnant by a local boy in her remote, rural village. The boy ran off, and Fatuma brought her baby to the big city, hoping to find some work and a better life. She left her younger brother and sister in the care of an uncle.

Earning barely enough to survive by washing clothes for neighbors, Fatuma saved enough money to return to the village to visit her brother and sister. She found them abandoned by the uncle and not in school. So she packed them up and brought them to stay with her and the baby in a cheap one-room flat.



Ibrahim, 13, had completed Primary 5 his last year in the village school. Hawa, 12, had completed P4. They certainly looked like village children in their dusty flip-flops and shabby clothes. Their report cards had been destroyed in a house fire, so we had the children evaluated by the local primary school near our office. The educational standards at their previous school were so poor that both of them were placed in P3. Ibra and Hawa are so happy to be in school that they don't mind sitting in a classroom with kids four and five years younger. Fatuma's improbable dream for her family has been realized.



*Hawa and Ibrahim*

**A burning desire.** Our children not only want to be in school, they want to learn. This year we decided to offer remedial coaching for those of our P6 students who were struggling with poor grades. We employed a local teacher for a two-hour session every Saturday. There are no snacks or other incentives, yet every one of our P6 kids attends, even the bright ones. These children want to take advantage of every opportunity!

As of this writing, we are assisting 220 students: 111 in primary, 102 in secondary, and seven in post-secondary programs. We know that God loves each one even more than we do, and trust that He will provide the means to fulfill their hopes and dreams. Thank you for being the instruments of His love.

With sincere appreciation,

*Peter & Sharon*

“In the eyes of God, children are neither black nor white, nor of any other color. They are only souls taken out of His heart like drops of blood. Who can tell which drop is worth more than the other?” –*Mother Gavriila*



*First-grade girls eagerly anticipate getting their new school shoes.*

We welcome your donations.

Checks may be sent to:

**St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund**

**P.O. Box 285**

**Chardon, OH 44024-0285**

Or you can donate online at

[www.ugandachildrensfund.org](http://www.ugandachildrensfund.org)

**The St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive tax deductible contributions.**